



# Evaluation Summaries

## Evaluation: Decent Employment for Women in India Project (DEW)

### Quick Facts

**Country:** India

**Final Evaluation:** August 2005

**Mode of Evaluation:** Independent

**Technical Area:** Employment Strategy

**Evaluation Management:** Asia

**Evaluation Team:** Anne Mossige; Lisa Wong-Ramesar; Jona Lai; Uday Kumar Varma

**Project Start:** September 2001

**Project End:** September 2005

**Project Code:** IND/00/50/USA  
(INT/00/05/USA)

**Donor:** United States (US\$ 1,164,795)

### Background & Context

**Project Background:** The main objective of DEW was to improve the employability of poor women in the informal sector and their social status in the labour market. The project was mainly implemented in Bangalore and Delhi.

DEW was a pilot project and was implemented mainly in two metropolitan areas, Delhi and Bangalore. The main target group was poor and often illiterate or semi-illiterate women living in slum areas in these two cities. The immediate project objectives were to:

- (i) improve the access of at least 2,000 poor women in the informal sector to effective training for better employability and knowledge of their rights as women workers; and

- (ii) ensure that at least 1,500 women who were trained were organized and had the necessary structures and supports to translate training into decent employment and improved welfare for themselves and their families.

The DEW project had a total of about 17 main activities divided into five components:

- (i) Capacity building of public vocational training institutes in developing and providing relevant skills training for improved employability of poor women in the informal sector;
- (ii) Capacity building of relevant NGOs, public training institutes and network structures to train poor women in the non-formal sector;
- (iii) Capacity building for training providers to train women in the informal sector;
- (iv) Actual delivery of training to at least 2,000 poor women in the two metropolitan areas of Delhi and Bangalore;
- (v) Improve the women trainees' employment opportunities and possibilities for improved family and child welfare

**Evaluation Context:** The purpose of the evaluation was to determine if the project had achieved its stated objectives, assess project impact on the target group and sustainability of project achievements, report on lessons learned and determine if the project was suitable for replication.

The evaluation's methodology included review of project material and other relevant literature; meetings and interviews with project staff and key project stakeholders in Delhi and Bangalore and telephone interviews with relevant staff at ILO headquarters in Geneva and USDOL; and visits to project sites in Delhi and Bangalore.

## Main Findings & Conclusions

**Project objectives, strategy, design and assumptions:** DEW's objectives of improving the employability of poor women in the informal sector in urban areas and in improving their social status by: (i) focusing on building capacities of public vocational training systems and (ii) providing vocational and soft skills to poor women were very relevant. However, DEW's outcomes did not include the institutionalization of non-formal training for poor women in the government training programs, institutes and structures which would have helped the project in focusing more on gaining Government support and commitment to ensure follow-up and expansion of non-formal training after the project closed. DEW was a pilot project in a relatively new area in India. Project design should have included a longer initial project period and an initial start up phase for studies, assessments and tests.

**Project Organization and support from ILO :** Although DEW's achievements were considerable, additional technical staff would have assisted the project in achieving even more, in particular in relation to the overall monitoring of activities, cross sharing of experiences between implementing partners and between Delhi and Bangalore, network and partnership building and long term-commitment and follow-up, particularly at Government level. Although vocational training for poor women in the informal and urban sector was a new terrain in India, DEW did not receive inputs from specialists outside India that had these specific skills. DEW was a decentralized project. It should have had a strong anchor in a technical department of ILO

that should be involved in all the project stages, including in (i) providing guidance to strategy and design and how to implement innovative activities and develop and adapt tools; (ii) documenting processes and assessing impacts; and (iii) drawing lessons learned.

**Project achievements:** DEW made important achievements related to developing, testing and validating high quality non-formal training materials in employable and soft skills for women in the informal sector. Furthermore, achievements were reached in providing employable skill training to poor and often illiterate women in slum areas. Although many of the women trained in non-traditional skills are still unemployed, overall 70% of the women trained by DEW have found employment and have raised their families' income after the training course. Additionally, improvements were made in building the capacities of public and non-governmental training providers in non-formal training for women. Other project achievements were mixed, such as the establishment of placement cells at National Vocational Training Institute (NVTI) and Regional Vocational Training Institute (RTVI) and a Data Base at NVTI providing information on trainees and training providers.

**Sustainability of project achievements:** There are important challenges related to the expected follow-up, replication and expansion of DEW's achievements by relevant Government training institutions. The challenges include:

- The lack of Government Focal points at various levels to take lead responsibility for the expansion, integration and institutionalization of non-formal training in the relevant public training institutions and for the continuation of the training networks initiated by DEW.
- Still limited capacities of many staff in actually training women at community level

- The weak capacities of Industrial Training Institutes (ITI) and their actual limited participation in DEW's activities.

Some NGO partners will have difficulties in continuing the training activities and the follow-up and initial hand holding of the women trainees without outside financial support.

## Recommendations & Lessons Learned

### Recommendations:

It is recommended that a possible follow-up of DEW in India by the ILO should focus on the need for the Government of India to follow-up and expand project activities and in the medium- or long term institutionalize non-formal training in the programs of many of its training institutions. Specific recommendations include:

Identify political and technical focal points with appropriate authority at different levels of the Government that can push for the follow-up and expansion of non-formal training in its training institutions.

Identify institutional mechanisms needed to formalize and institutionalize non-formal training in Government institutions, including the actual or potential bottlenecks and determine appropriate action to remove obstacles. This also includes the identification of future needs to decentralize decision-making related to the identification and development of curricula.

Establish temporal milestones related to institutional changes

Identify one Government nodal institution/focal point with adequate authority that will take the lead responsibility – and link with appropriate partner institutions

Assess the quality of DEW's training materials as well as their actual use and prospects for future expansion and replication by Government, non-governmental and private training institutions. This should be done by a skill development specialist with adequate

experience in training of women in the informal and urban sector

If budget allows, assess the need for developing and testing materials related to new vocational skills. Focus more on testing and cross sharing in and from many sites

Ensure experience sharing between partners and stakeholders in all sites and the development of standards in methodologies and approaches

Focus on active employment and build effective linkages to markets and small-scale employers.

### Lessons Learned:

The DEW project experience provides several lessons learned for current and future projects and programs of Ministry of Labour/ Government of India, ILO and USDOL. The main lessons include:

- (i) The need for a realistic project design and time frame, in particular for pilot projects.
- (ii) The fact that capacity building takes time
- (iii) The need to provide decentralized pilot projects with adequate technical staff and technical support and e.g. to link them with a strong anchor in a technical department in the ILO
- (iv) The importance of focusing on strong involvement of project partners, experts and beneficiaries in the development of training materials, and to realize that this can be complex and takes time.
- (v) The need to build strong linkages to markets and employers, in particular small scale employers, to ensure employability of skills.
- (vi) The importance of focusing from the onset on project sustainability and identify when, how and who will take over and follow-up on project achievements after the project period.